STRING-PULLER PHILOSOPHY



BREAD
& PUPPET
2009

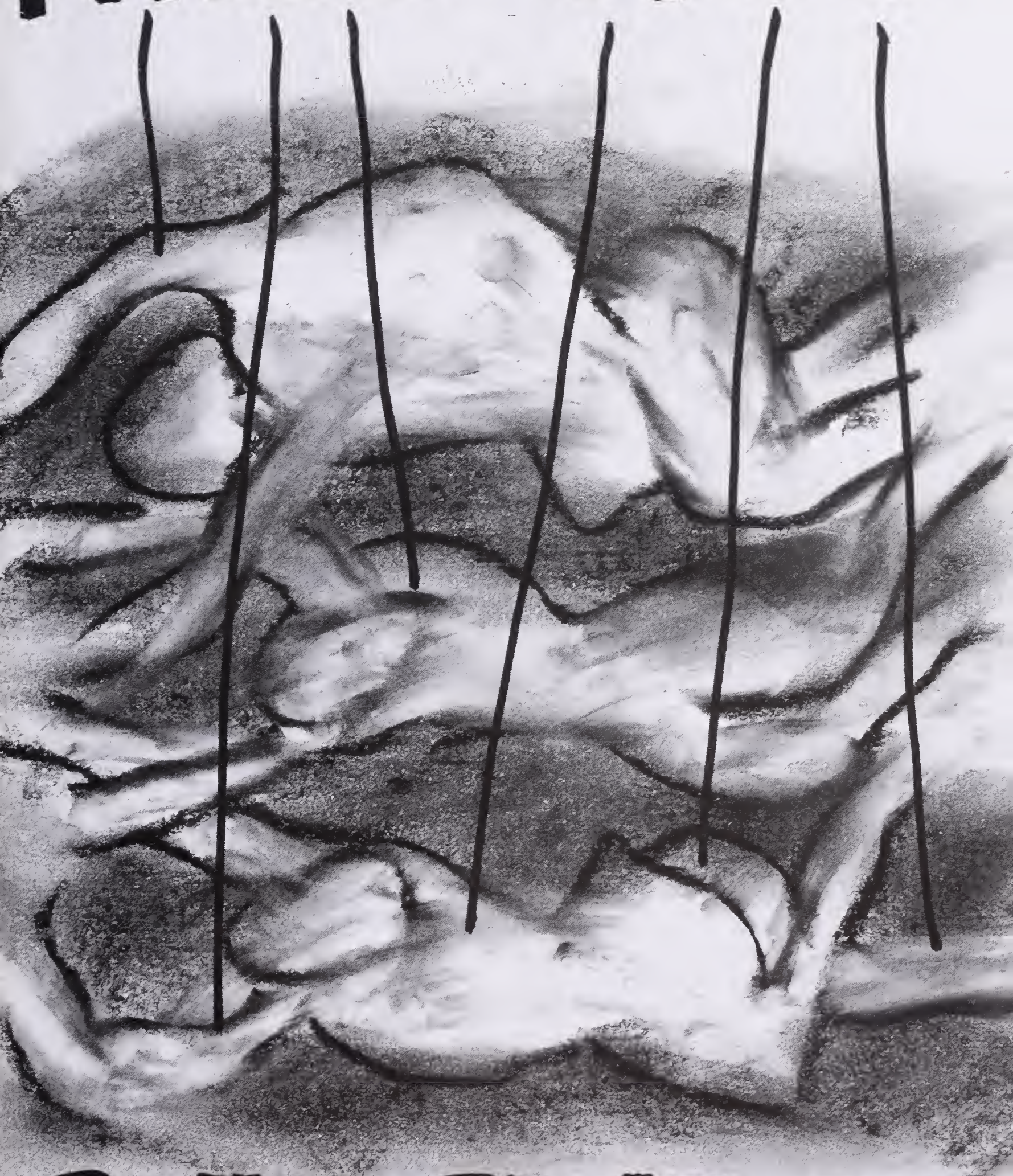
STRING-PULLER PHILOSOPHY

charcoal drawings & text by Peter Schumann

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PROPER PEDAGOGICAL COMMITMENT



THE ENGINE OF CULTURE



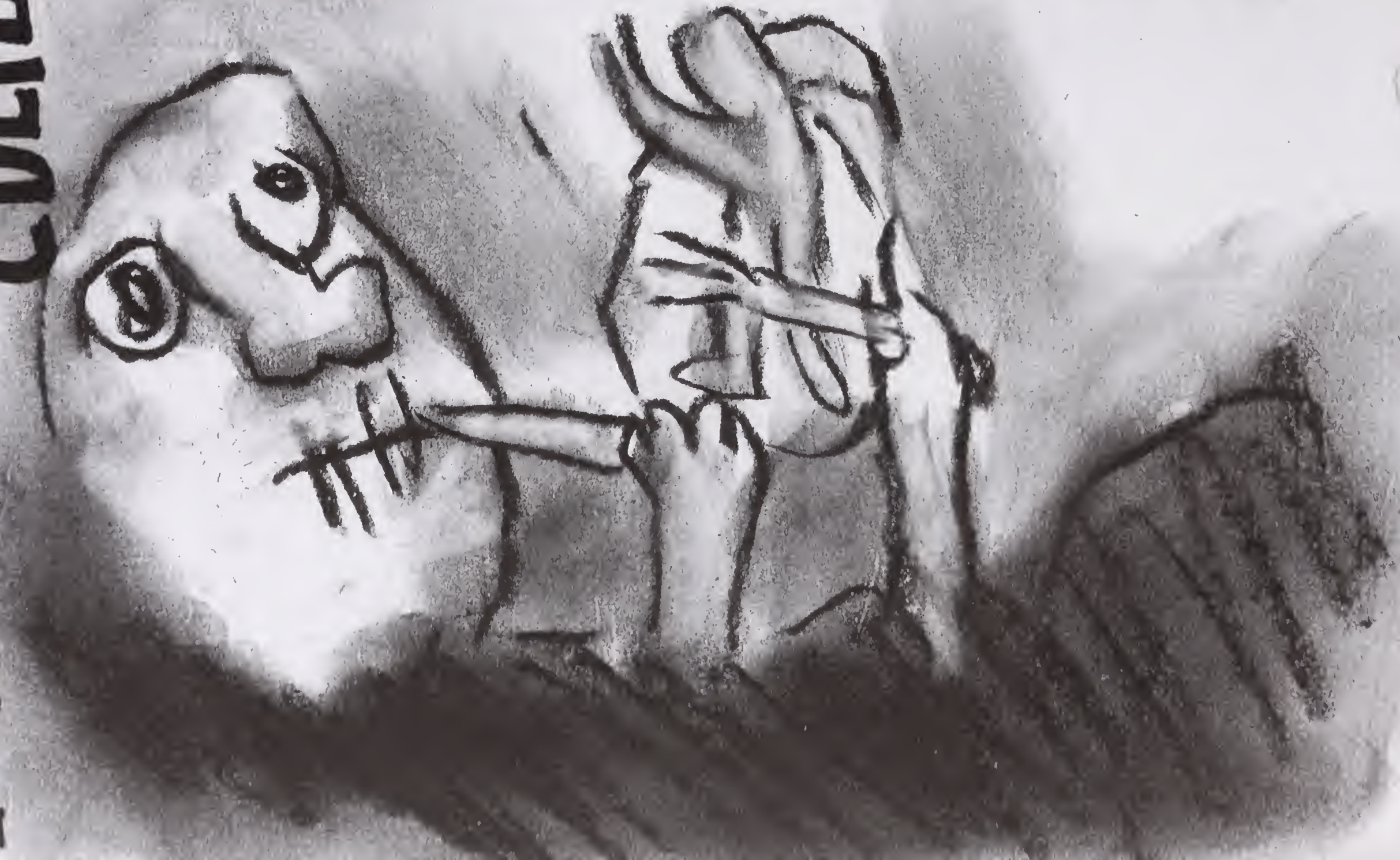
Margareta Niculescu asked me to write about my experiences and educational thoughts regarding my visits to the Institut International de la Marionette. I am grateful to Margareta and the Institut for inviting me again and again, until it finally dawned on them that I lacked the proper pedagogical commitment which any school needs to request from its teachers, and consistently misused diligent puppetry students for merciless nothing-but-puppetshow-making without any design to further anybody's future aspirations in the field of puppetry.

The purpose of a school is to produce professionals who pour their learned fuel into the engines of culture, so that the engines can take humanity to some Somewhere, wherever that Somewhere may be.

What do professional puppeteers do after they graduate? How do they find application for their skills? What is the relationship of the modernist culture to puppetry?

In their capacity as string-pullers, puppeteers imitate the pertinent divinities that run the gigantic everyday puppetshow: the invasion-liberation-submission puppetshow, the lousy economy puppetshow, the glorious

MODERN PUPPETRY VERSUS CULTURE



PERTINENT DIVINITIES

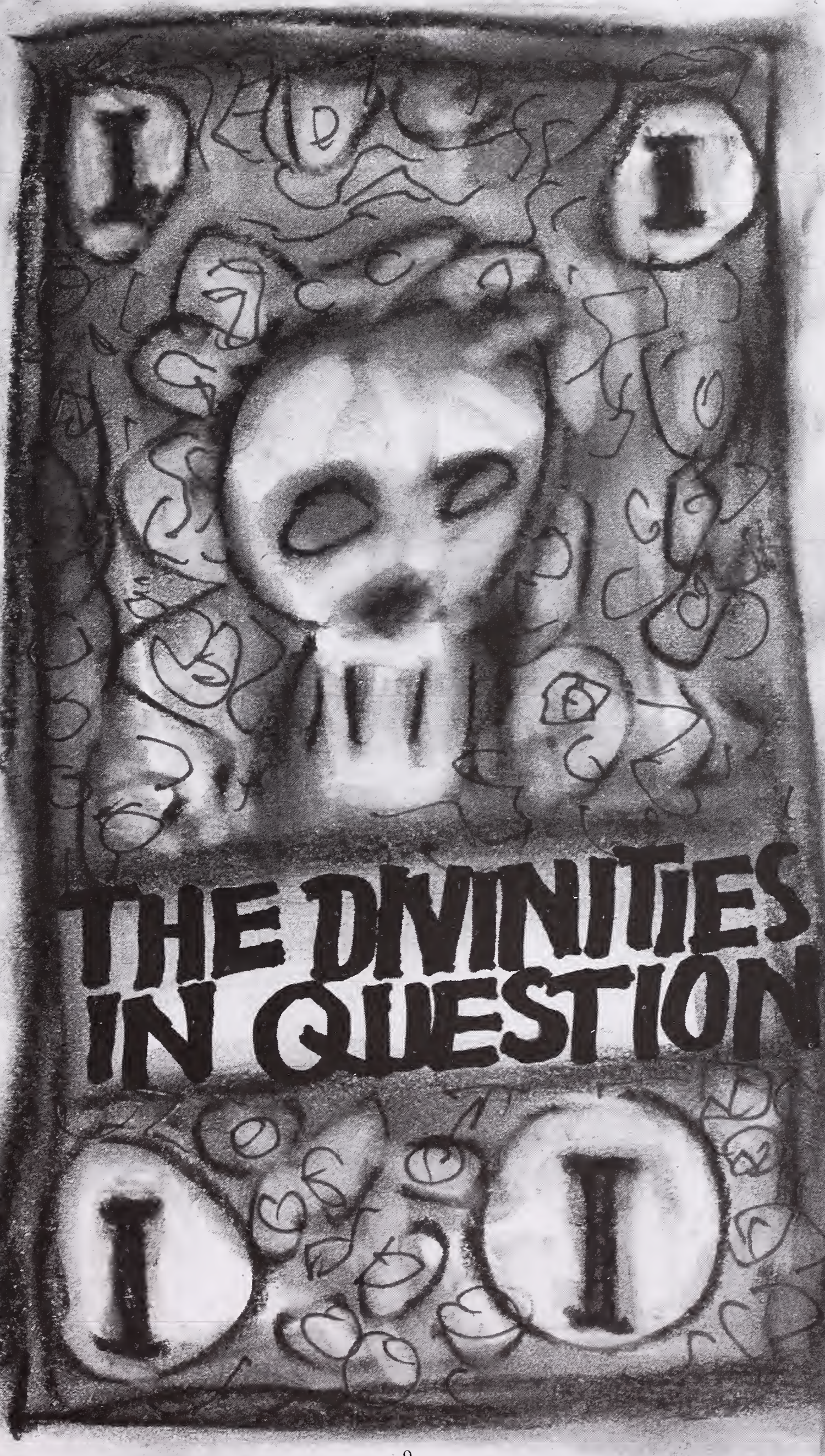


banking-system-collapse puppetshow, as well as any visionary get-the-Hell-out-of-here spectacle. All citizens help perform these confused manipulations, and all are, at the same time, their captivated audience.

The divinities in question are, like all divinities, man-made, and are put on strings and made to dance to the drumbeat of the prevailing wind, until more skillful puppeteers reset the strings to serve new purposes: the ballet master pulls the dancer's strings after the latest fashion; the mountain-top pulls the mountain-climber to the top, just minutes before the mountain-top-removal equipment is activated; the subway pulls the rush-hour customer to his eternal job.

How does a puppeteer survive her divine capabilities? How does she get stuck and unstuck from the powerful string-pulling systems, which employ her?

The puppetshow magic box, which is now obligatory in every home between the North and South Poles, flickers exactly like real life and is hugely true to the real thing, the global Ding-Dong, the economically-politically Correct Moment. The confessed mission of the magic box is


THE DIVINITIES
IN QUESTION


THE GLOBAL
DING-DONG

information, specifically, relentless information, not just in citizen-size and therefore negligible increments, but so unforgivingly massive in scope, that it absolutely squashes the attentive brain. Either brain or attention must be gotten rid of. And since excerpted life with its silly humdrum meaninglessness is commercially unattractive, better-than-life ingredients are added to the relentlessness to improve digestibility. The devouring of the puppetshow is a calculated part of its essence: the more you eat, the happier you get. Happiness is in the toothless smile of the box's music, as well as in the teeth of the gorgeous puppet-performers. Big fat happinesses issue forth like campfire smoke from all mountains and valleys that contain humans, entirely due to the unstopable puppetshow.

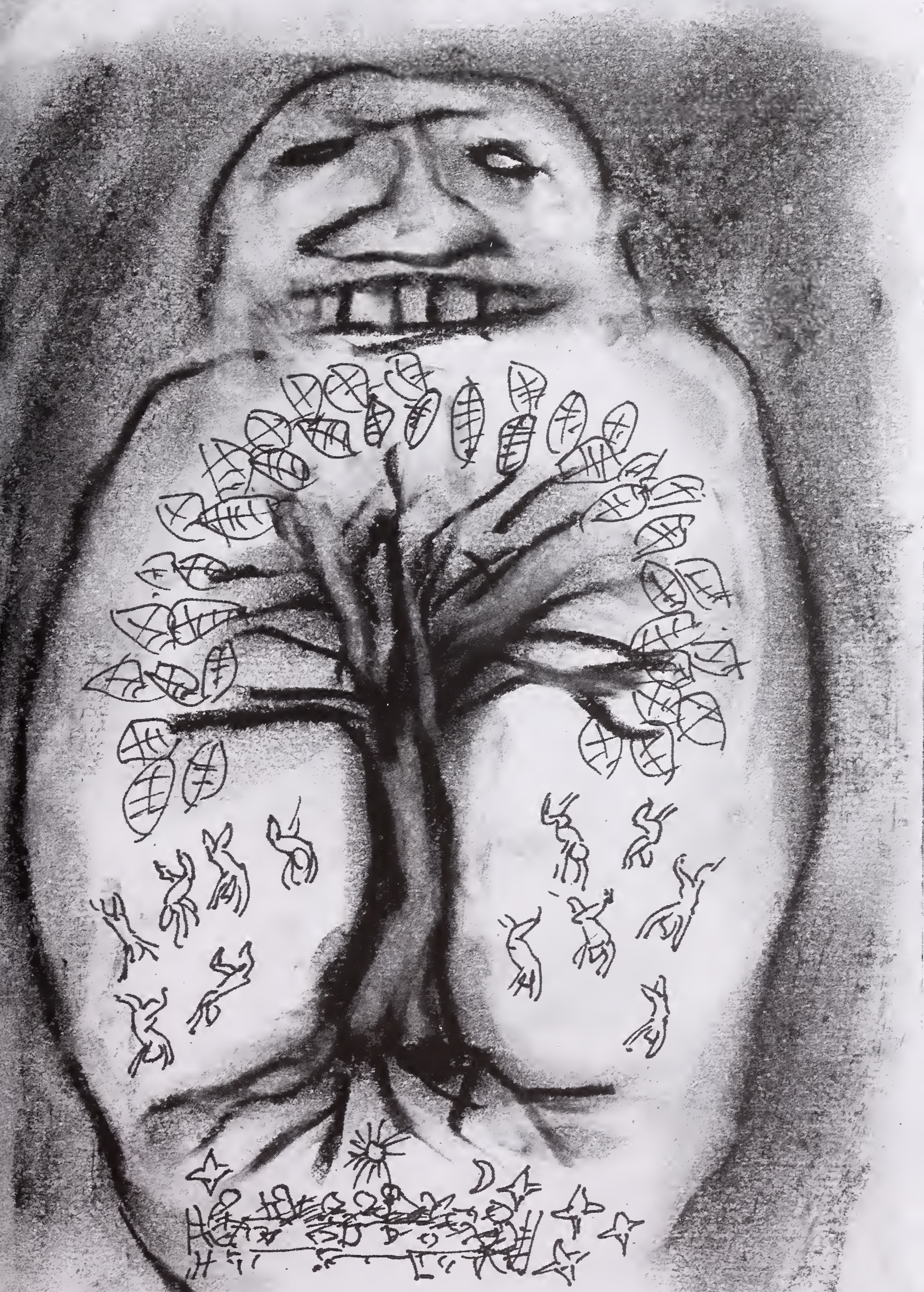
Puppeteers, as divine imitators, have trouble keeping up with their over-bearing divinities, since the divinities themselves are tossed into the cauldron of military collapses and banking atrocities.

The chief talent of puppetry is to make life smaller and bigger than it is, to distort it in view of its hidden agenda, and then to throw this distortion back into its face. With that talent mobilized and in accordance with the latest schemes of the Desire Industry, endlessly bloody

BIG FAT HAPPINESSES



HIDDEN AGENDA



puppetshows, suited for dwarfs and giants only and entirely unfit for human consumption, are endlessly consumed by humans. The Big and the Little of puppetry edge everything else on. What's not big has to be little, and what's little deserves to be so; its only way out is to grin and giggle and repeat its same old jokes over and over again. Big is the result of bigger material and bigger decision-making. Unnecessarily big sticks, combined with oversized convictions, make arbitrary giants, who won't go away.

They are here. We are—barely. They can't be eliminated. We can. They are faster than super-speedways and taller than insurance palaces. Eventually the strings themselves have to learn to think. That thinking has to be transmitted to the string-pullers. And that process might yield the necessary philosophy, which the string-pullers need.

Long live the Puppetry School of Charleville-Mézières!

DWARFS & GIANTS ONLY



GO AWAY

The Institut International de la Marionette, founded in 1981, is located in the beautiful city of Charleville-Mézieres on the Meuse River in France.

Bread & Puppet Theater's founder and director, Peter Schumann, led several workshops at the Puppetry School there, beginning in the 1980's. The most recent Bread & Puppet workshop was in 2001 and was run by puppeteers Clare Dolan, Damiano Giambelli, Christiane Burkard and Miriam LeGault.



ES/PM